

The Mirror

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Summary: Buffy reflects on what the bodyswitching experience meant to her -- and even more, what it meant to Faith.

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Angstyfic - Viginette Disclaimer: Render unto Joss what is Joss'.

Spoilers: This Year's Girl / Who Am I? Author's Notes: The lyrics in this story are taken from "Lost in the Darkness", which is the opening song in the Broadway musical 'Jekyll & Hyde'

~*~*~*~*~*~

//Lost in the darkness,// //Silence surrounds you.// //Once there was morning,// //Now endless night.//

Until the moment that I looked into her face - *my* face - and saw the bundle of emotions gleaming from it, I never really understood. But seeing that look of hatred, anguish, and fear was like looking in my mirror. It was simply ironic that I was looking into a true mirror this time, not just a simple piece of glass to reflect my image, but looking at my own face.

The ultimate lesson of being someone else for a day. The wonders of modern magic that body-switching could be done so simply and effectively. Talk about living in a golden age of new innovation. But somehow I don't think that it's the sort of spell that is often used for the purposes of good.

Faith first just wanted my body to make a get-away and to wreak some cheerful havoc with my life, this I know. Considering that I sent her into an eight-month coma, I don't doubt that she was running a bit of a revenge kick. Getting some revenge for Mayor Wilkins was probably also in it.

//If I could reach you,// //I'd guide you and teach you// //To walk

from the darkness// //Back into the light.//

Willow wonders why I'm not angrier at Faith, and why I asked her not to badmouth my prodigal little sister anymore. She doesn't understand - none of them do. They didn't see the expression on her face, or hear her sobbing screams as she beat the crap out of herself - or rather, me.

'Bitch' 'Murderer'

I never knew that Faith had so much self-hatred. Neither did she, apparently. I could see in her eyes after we'd made the switch back that she had suddenly realized the real truth about Slaying.

You have to be able to look at yourself in the mirror in the morning.

Everything has its price. She had killed for the sheer joy of blood and tried to bring about the Ascension of a demon. Spending eight months in a coma hadn't been her penance, it had been a slight bump in the road. It was a risk that she was prepared for when we began our last fight. Both of us had gone in with the knowledge that it could result in death, and we had both accepted that.

No, Faith's penance was a Hell of her own making. Sometimes the greatest torture can be your own presence. There is no doubt in my mind that I'll meet her again, but only the Powers themselves know what she'll be like when that day comes.

//Deep in your silence,// //Please try to hear me:// //I'll keep you near me// //Till night passes by.//

But what I told the gang is true. Faith is my responsibility. She made her own choices about everything, but my actions influenced those choices. Faith needed so desperately to be loved and trusted, and back then, I just couldn't give her what she needed. I was barely making it myself. The only one who gave her that complete love was the Mayor. Yeah, he used her, but first and foremost he loved her like a daughter.

I loved her like a sister, but I didn't let her know this when I should've. Her 'father' is dead, directly through my actions. The sister remains, and whether my duty is to kill her or love her, I will carry it out.

But I don't want to kill her. I've felt her blood on my hands once, and that's enough for me. I'd much rather love her.

Last night, I had a dream. And wherever Faith is, I know that she had it too.

We were in my room again, spreading clean sheets on the bed for her visit. Together, we smoothed every wrinkle from the soft white cotton, but then she started bleeding again. One drop, then two, fell. Faith started scrubbing at them desperately with her hands, but the only result was that her hands became bloody as well.

'It won't come out!' she cried in anguish. 'Why won't it come out?'

'It can be washed.' I found myself saying. 'It'll be clean again.' A blue glass pitcher full of water appeared in my hands, and I slowly poured it over Faith's hands and the sheet. In the cleansing stream, the blood slowly flowed away.

The look of wonder on Faith's face as she regarded her clean hands was the image that lingered in my mind when I woke up. And I knew that somewhere, Faith turned over and fell into a deeper, peaceful sleep.

//I will find the answer.// //I'll never desert you -// //I promise you this -// //Till the day that I die...//

End
file.